

Claims:

1. An areal metal element having a surface (13) which extends from a first outside edge (8) to a second outside edge (9) lying opposite the first outside edge (8), with the region of the metal element adjoining the first outside edge (8) forming a first side region (26) and the region of the metal element adjoining the second outer edge (9) forming a second side region (27), both said side regions being connected to one another by a central region (28) lying between them, and with at least one completely bordered aperture (22, 23) being formed in at least one of the side regions (26, 27), with its border being formed in one part by said side region (26, 27) and in the other part by the central region (28),
characterized in that
the central region (28) includes at least two sections (29, 30) which each consist of two outwardly disposed part sections (31, 33; 34, 36) and a central part section (32, 35) lying between them; in that the outwardly disposed part sections (31, 33; 34, 36) are folded over with respect to the central part section (32, 35) for the production of the aperture (22, 23); in that the sections (29, 30) form part of the border of the aperture (22, 23); and in that the central region (28) including the sections (29, 30) is made in one piece with the two side regions (26, 27) of the metal element.
2. A metal element in accordance with claim 1, characterized in that at least some of the outwardly disposed part sections (31, 33; 34, 36) are folded over in opposite senses to one another, i.e. in directions opposite to one another.

3. A metal element in accordance with claim 2, characterized in that one of the outwardly disposed part sections (31, 34) is folded over toward the upper side of the central part section (32, 35) and the other outwardly disposed part section (33, 36) is folded over toward the lower side of the central part section (32, 35).
5
4. A metal element in accordance with any one of the preceding claims, characterized in that at least some of the outwardly disposed part sections are folded over in the same sense with respect to one another, i.e. extending in the same direction.
10
5. A metal element in accordance with claim 4, characterized in that both outwardly disposed part sections are folded over toward the same side, i.e. either both toward the upper side or both toward the lower side of the central part section.
15
6. A metal element in accordance with any one of the preceding claims, characterized in that a plurality of apertures (22, 23) are formed at least in one of the side regions (26, 27).
20
7. A metal element in accordance with claim 6, characterized in that a plurality of apertures (22, 23) are formed in each of the side regions (26, 27).
- 25 8. A metal element in accordance with any one of the preceding claims, characterized in that additional apertures are formed in the central region (28).
9. A metal element in accordance with claim 8, characterized in that the apertures formed in the central region (28) are formed in corre-
30

spondence with the apertures (22, 23) formed in the side regions (26, 27).

10. A metal element in accordance with any one of the preceding claims,
5 characterized in that a section (29, 30) is formed as a web (10, 10', 10", 11, 11', 11") with side edges extending parallel to one another.
11. A metal element in accordance with any one of the preceding claims,
10 characterized in that the side edges of different webs (10, 10', 10", 11, 11', 11") extend parallel to one another or obliquely to one another.
12. A metal element in accordance with any one of the preceding claims,
15 characterized in that the spacing (12, 12') between the first and the second outside edges (8, 9) with folded over part sections (31, 33; 34, 36) is substantially larger than with non-folded over part sections (31, 33; 34, 36).
13. A metal element in accordance with claim 12, characterized in that
20 the spacing (12') with folded over part sections (31, 33; 34, 36) is approximately between 1.3 and 4 times as large, in particular approximately between 2 and 3 times as large, as the spacing (12) with non-folded over part sections (31, 33; 34, 36).
- 25 14. A metal element in accordance with any one of the preceding claims, characterized in that the apertures (22, 23) repeat at regular intervals.
15. A metal element in accordance with any one of the preceding claims,
30 characterized in that the material of the metal element is substan-

tially unexpanded, i.e. no stretching of the material takes place for the production of the aperture.

- 5 16. A metal element in accordance with any one of the preceding claims, characterized in that the side regions (26, 27) have a substantially planar surface (13) with the exception of the apertures (22, 23).
- 10 17. A metal element in accordance with any one of the preceding claims, characterized in that the surface (13) of the metal element is substantially planar with the exception of the apertures (22, 23).
- 15 18. A metal element in accordance with any one of the preceding claims, characterized in that the folded over, outwardly disposed part sections (31, 33; 34, 36) each include an angle with the central part section (32, 35) of approximately 110° to 0° , preferably from approximately 90° to 0° , advantageously from approximately 45° to 0° , in particular from approximately 10° to 0° .
- 20 19. A metal element in accordance with any one of the preceding claims, characterized in that each of the folded over, outwardly disposed part sections (31, 33; 34, 36), which is directly connected to a side region (26, 27), merges continuously, in particular in a planar manner, into the side region (26, 27) connected to it.
- 25 20. A metal element in accordance with any one of the preceding claims, characterized in that a further metal section (53, 54) respectively adjoins the first and/or the second outside edge (8, 9) and forms an angular section (51, 52) together with the material extending between first and the second outside edges (8, 9).

21. A metal element in accordance with claim 20, characterized in that the angular section (51, 52) is L-shaped, V-shaped, U-shaped, C-shaped, T-shaped, I-shaped or Z-shaped.
- 5 22. A metal element in accordance with one of claims 20 or 21, characterized in that the further metal section (53, 54) or the further metal sections is/are formed in one piece with the remaining part of the metal element.
- 10 23. A metal element in accordance with any one of the preceding claims, characterized in that in addition to the first and second side regions (26, 27), a third and a fourth side region are present which lie opposite one another and respectively extend transversely, in particular perpendicularly, to the first and second side regions (26, 27); and in
15 that the design of the surface (13) in a direction from the third side region to the fourth side region substantially corresponds to the design of the surface (13) in a direction from the first side region to the second side region (26, 27).
- 20 24. A metal element in accordance with any one of the preceding claims, characterized in that to increase the bending stiffness over the length of the metal element, sequential sections (29, 30) are not only arranged along a straight line, in particular in the longitudinal direction of the metal element, but in that at least some sections (29,
25 30) are arranged laterally offset to one another.
25. Use of a metal element in accordance with any one of the preceding claims as a section element (51, 52), in particular as a corner section or as a holder section, as a protective grid, as a fence section,
30 as a filter mat, as a soundproofing element, as a plant climbing

frame, as a step element, as a reinforcement mat, as an insert in composite materials, as a cable duct, as an aperture band, as a fitting element or as a decorative section